

**2005-06 Consolidated Grants Program
Stakeholder Workshop
July 22, 2005 – Oakland**

Feedback

Feedback on Priorities

- ❖ The priorities need to be ranked so the State Water Board only invites a certain number of proposals back for the second phase. The way it is set up now it seems like everyone will be invited back for the second phase because the applicants will have read the guidelines and therefore their projects will have met the priorities and additional criteria required.
- ❖ It sounds like the priorities came up because of the need for transparency. The list of priorities sounds like it will be too big. The State Water Board needs to communicate to the public on which priorities are most important and which will be used to invite applicants back. It seems like common sense to rank the projects and have top priorities.
- ❖ Having the priorities listed is very helpful because during the last round of consolidated grants we spent a lot of time and money on a proposal that we thought was addressing a high priority in the region. It turned out that the Regional Water Board felt different and the project did not get funded.
- ❖ Urge the State Water Board to include Environmental Justice as additional criteria for selection of projects.
- ❖ I would like to see the priorities grouped by geographic area.
- ❖ Suggest listing the priorities by categories of ecological significance.
- ❖ The priorities need to be included in the guidelines. The Guidelines need to be inclusive and contain all documents/references needed. Don't refer applicants to other documents outside of the Guidelines.
- ❖ It would be helpful to have the priorities listed in a way that described the problems in the watersheds and the applicant could determine the approach to solve the problem. I would like flexibility in the approach to solve the problem.
- ❖ Suggest having agency contacts listed to help the applicants with the regional priorities.
- ❖ Suggest listing the priorities by watershed and then color coding the priorities by the agency that submitted the priorities. This would help if the applicant had questions on the priorities because they could call the agency or go to the appropriate agency reference to get more information.

Feedback on Proposed Maximum and Minimum Grant Amounts

- ❖ Placing \$5 million maximum on the CALFED Watershed program limits projects. This is too high of a maximum grant amount. The maximum should be lower so that more small projects can be funded.
- ❖ The CALFED goals and objectives should be considered when deciding the minimum and maximum grant amounts for the CALFED Watershed program. If CALFED's goals are to fund capacity projects then \$5 million is too high of a maximum for capacity projects.
- ❖ CALFED watershed program should have a \$1,000,000 maximum grant amount.
- ❖ For the Integrated Watershed Management Program (IWMP), if you have a \$10 million dollar cap, it seems high if you are trying to get the money to smaller watershed groups. This maximum grant amount seems as if you are trying to reach the same watershed groups as in the Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) program.
- ❖ The IWMP maximum grant amount of \$10 million seems high. If you only have two years to spend the money then it may be difficult to spend \$10 million in this time frame.
- ❖ Suggest breaking down the grant amounts available for planning and implementation for the IWMP.
- ❖ Minimum amounts for grant programs should depend on how much money is being set aside for small programs. If the State Water Board is not setting aside a lot of money then all of the minimums should be lower.
- ❖ Going below \$250,000 for the minimum grant amount creates problems because the grant process is administratively strained. If you had a lower grant amount, such as \$50,000, then the grant wouldn't even cover the administrative costs.
- ❖ The IWMP minimum and maximum grant amounts are fine. They allow you to have big or small projects.
- ❖ If you set aside money for small grants you may want to consider reducing the administrative requirements in the grant process.
- ❖ Suggest setting aside 5% of total funds available for each program for small projects.
- ❖ Suggest looking at the need for small projects in each funding category to determine how much of the total grant funding available should be set aside for small projects.
- ❖ When maximum grant amounts are set too high the larger projects usually get their grant amounts reduced because there is a lot of pressure at the State Water Board to fund a lot of projects instead of a few large projects. The State Water Board needs to decide if it wants to fund a few large projects or a lot of smaller projects.

- ❖ Suggest funding the projects in phases. The invoicing can be set up for a deliverable for each phase and you would get the funding for that phase when the deliverable has been met. This would help the smaller agencies that do not have enough money to fund the project up front.

Feedback on Proposed Technical Review Process

- ❖ It doesn't matter if you score the criteria individually or by review panel. All that matters is that the reviewers have read the guidelines and score the proposals consistently.
- ❖ Suggest having each proposal reviewed by three people and then have them come together to score proposal.
- ❖ Many liked the idea of having reviewers with areas of expertise (i.e. environmental justice, scientific background, local expertise, etc.)
- ❖ Clarity is the most important thing. Be clear with the reviewers and the applicants as to what criteria the proposals will be scored on.
- ❖ Review guidelines from the applicant and the reviewer's point of view.
- ❖ It would be helpful if the reviewers could provide feedback on the concept proposal if the applicant is being invited back for the next phase. This way the applicant can get a feel for which areas of the proposal are weak.
- ❖ Need to make it clear in the guidelines how the track records of applicants will be used. If several groups come together on a project and one of the groups has had problems in the past, will the entire proposal be thrown out? It seems unfair to throw out a proposal if there is one bad apple in the bunch.
- ❖ Need to let people know what changes have been made to the application process, the review process, and the grant contract process to make it easier. Because of difficulty in the past, many applicants may not apply unless they know that you are working to make the process easier.
- ❖ Would reviewers have the option of reducing funding by eliminating tasks or projects? Wouldn't want a whole project dropped because reviewers didn't like one part.